United Nations E/2003/32 (Part II)

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: [illegible]
26 Aug[illegible] 2003

Original: English

Resumed substantive session of 2003
New York, 22 August 2003
Agenda item 12
Non-governmental organizations

Report of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations on its 2003 regular session*

(New York, 5-23 May 2003)

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03-48148 (E) 061003

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Part two

II. Applications for consultative status and requests for reclassification

1. The Committee considered agenda item 3 at its 2nd, 5th, 6th, 7th, 9th to 15th, 19th, 21st, 23rd, 25th and 27th meetings, on 5, 7 to 9, 12 to 15 and 19 to 23 May 2003. It had before it a memorandum by the Secretary-General containing new applications for consultative status received from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (E/C.2/2003/CRP.2 and Add.1-5) as well as a compilation of applications for consultative status deferred from previous sessions (E/C.2/2003/CRP.1).

A. Applications for consultative status and requests for reclassification deferred from previous sessions of the Committee

1. Requests for consultative status

Applications recommended

2. The Committee recommended that the Council grant consultative status to 12 organizations whose applications had been deferred from previous sessions (see part one, chap. I, draft decision I, subpara. (a)).

Applications deferred pending responses to questions posed by the Committee

3. The Committee deferred its consideration of the applications of the following organizations pending the receipt of responses to questions posed by the Committee during its 2003 regular session:

African Community Resource Center

African Hebrew Organization

Ambedkar Centre for Justice and Peace

American Conservative Union, The

Asian-Eurasian Human Rights Forum

Association Internationale de Boxe Educative

Association of Expelled (Displaced-Exiled) Persons

Center for Research in Rural and Industrial Development

Christian Conference of Asia

Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative

Disarmament Archives

Federation of IJAW Communities, The

Human Rights International Alliance

Indian Federation of United Nations Associations

Indian Social Institute

International Centre for Peace Studies

International Crisis Group

Kashmiri American Council

Le Foyer Musulman, Association Internationale pour les droits de l'Homme

Morality in Media, Inc.

Mountain Women Development Organization

Myochikai (Arigatou Foundation)

National Abortion Federation

National Coalition to abolish the Death Penalty

NIRDHAR — Women and Child Development Organization

Nonviolence International

One World International

Relief International

Russian Public Movement "For Civil Rights"

Society for the Promotion of Youth and Masses

WAMY International Inc.

World Council of Muslim Communities, Inc.

World Organization for Education, Science and Development

World Sindhi Institute

The Heritage Foundation

4. At its 26th meeting on 23 May 2003, the Committee recommended granting special consultative status to the organization. The delegation of Cuba disassociated itself from the consensus on this recommendation.

International Society for Human Rights

5. The Committee considered the application of International Society for Human Rights, an organization which had been deferred since 1999, at its 12th, 19th and 25th meetings, on 13, 19, and 22 May 2003.

6. The representative of Germany believed that the organization had entered into an extensive dialogue with several members of the Committee in order to provide further clarifications of its activities. He was convinced that the work of the organization deserved recognition and proposed that roster status be granted to it. Since a consensus could not be reached to grant consultative status to the organization, he made a proposal to be put to vote to grant it roster status. At the 25th meeting on 22 May 2003, the proposal made by Germany was carried by a roll-call vote of 9 to 4, with 6 abstentions.

Statements in explanations of vote before the vote

7. Statements in explanation of vote before the vote were made by the representatives of China and France. The representative of China stated that his delegation would vote against granting status to the organization because the organization had failed to respond to its question concerning the approach taken by the organization on human rights situation in Asian countries. He was of the view that the Committee should not rush into a vote on the request made by the organization.

In favour:

Cameroon, Chile, Colombia, France, Germany, Peru, Romania, Turkey, United States of America

Against:

China, Cuba, Russian Federation, Zimbabwe

Abstaining:

Côte d'Ivoire, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Pakistan, Senegal, Sudan

Statements in explanation of vote after the vote

8. Statements in explanation of vote were made by the representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Cuba, the Sudan and Pakistan. The representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Sudan and Pakistan underlined that they hoped that in the future, the organization would abide strictly by the rules and provisions of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31. They were particularly concerned by the views the organization held on Islamic law. The organization should be cautious as to how it will approach religious sensitivities in its activities.

9. The representative of Cuba said that there were conflicting elements between what the representative of the NGO said and what was in the application of the organization. He further stated that his delegation was not satisfied with the answers provided by the representative nor with those sent in written form. Most of them were ambiguous and contradictory. The representative of the NGO has also been intentionally inexact and used arguments that were not at all convincing and even false. These statements showed that the organization carried out activities that were politically motivated against the Member States.

10. This organization included Mr. Ricardo Bolfil among the members of its International Board with the post of Vice-President. Mr. Bolfil had declared an openly belligerent position against the Government of Cuba, and the activities of his organization were aimed at subverting Cuba's inner order. With this aim, Mr. Bolfil had relationships and coordinated activities with illegal organizations in Cuba, and above all, with organizations that had undertaken action from abroad to oust the legitimate and constitutional Government established in Cuba, using whatever means necessary. He had maintained, and still maintains links with organizations that have encouraged, and still encourage, terrorist actions against Cuba. The representative of Cuba stated that his Government did not accept the fact that Mr. Bolfil was considered a promoter of non-violence in his actions to reach his goal. The delegation will keep informed of the behaviour of the organization, hoping that in the future it may follow the letter and the spirit of the Council resolution 1996/31.

General statements after the vote

11. Statements were made by the representatives of China and Germany. The representative of China said that she was shocked by the fact that the Committee had been rushed to a vote when, in fact, many delegations were not ready to take a decision and needed more clarification on a number of questions that remained unanswered by the delegation. She said that this practice was deemed inappropriate and irresponsible as it served to harm the reputation of the Committee and its traditional friendly cooperation. It is hoped that this practice would not create a bad precedent in the future work of the Committee.

12. The representative of Germany declared that the position of his delegation had always been transparent with regard to the NGO.

Application closed

13. At its 9th meeting on 12 May 2003, the Committee decided to take note of the request of Shandong Society for Sustainable Development to withdraw its application.

14. Owing to time constraints, the Committee did not have time to review the following applications, whose requests were deferred to the 2003 resumed session of the Committee:

Thirty-First December Women's Movement

Conscience Africaine — African Network of Grassroots Democracy

2. Requests for reclassification

15. At previous sessions, the Committee had decided to defer the application of the International Association of Charities, which had been placed on the roster by virtue of its consultative status with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the Movement for a Better World, pending responses to questions posed by the Committee. At its 19th meeting, on 19 May 2003, the Committee reclassified the two organizations from roster to special (see part one, chap. I, draft decision I, subpara. (b)).

B. New applications for consultative status and new requests for reclassification

16. The Committee considered item 3 (b) of its agenda, new applications for consultative status and new requests for reclassification, contained in documents E/C.2/2003/R.2 /Add.1-5 at its 2nd, 5th, 6th, 10th, 12th, 15th, 18th, 20th, 22nd, 23rd and 24th meetings, on 5, 7, 8, 12, 13, 15 and 19 to 22 May 2003.

1. New applications for consultative status

Applications recommended

17. The Committee recommended that consultative status with the Council be granted to 44 organizations that had submitted new applications (see part one, chap. I, draft decision I, subpara. (a)).

Applications deferred pending responses to questions posed by the Committee

18. The Committee decided to defer its consideration of the applications of the following organizations pending the receipt of responses to questions posed by the Committee at its 2003 regular session or due to lack of time:

Advocates for Youth

Alliance Vietnam Liberté

Association Tunisienne des Femmes Démocratiques

Center for Victims of Torture, The

International Association Promoting Human Rights

International Association of Science Parks

Lawyers Without Borders

Pasumai Thaayagam Foundation (Green Motherland)

People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy

World Trade Point Federation

World Vision Canada

Alliance Vietnam Liberté

19. At its 5th meeting on 7 May 2003, the Committee heard the representative of Viet Nam, Mr. Nguyen Thanh Chau, speaking as an observer State, express his concern about the NGO. He stated that the organization was linked to the National Unified Front for Viet Nam Liberation, responsible for sabotage activities against the Government of Viet Nam. He expressed the view that some elements of this organization used to work for the former regime in south Viet Nam during the Viet Nam War and had committed serious crimes against their own people. After 1975, he pointed out that the members of this organization went into exile, and then carried out sabotage activities, including terrorist ones against the people of Viet Nam, in their national construction and development process.

20. The representative of Viet Nam believed that the acts of this organization constituted obstructions to the cause of economic, cultural and social development in Viet Nam, which was against the spirit and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and Council resolution 1996/31. The representative stated that, for the above reasons, the organization did not qualify for status with the Council.

21. The representative of China took the floor to support the views of Viet Nam.

Application closed

22. At its 20th meeting on 20 May 2003, the Committee took note of the request submitted by the International Study Association for Cross-Cultural Human Resource Development to withdraw its application for consultative status.

2. New requests for reclassifications

23. At the 18th meeting, on 19 May 2003, the Committee decided to defer consideration of the request for reclassification of the following organization from special to general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council:

World Vision International

III. Review of quadrennial reports submitted by non-governmental organizations in general and special status with the Economic and Social Council

A. Quadrennial reports deferred from previous sessions of the Committee

24. The Committee considered quadrennial reports deferred from previous sessions under item 4 of its agenda at its 8th, 20th and 25th meetings, on 9, 20 and 22 May 2003. It had before it a memorandum by the Secretary-General containing a compilation of quadrennial reports submitted by NGOs in general and consultative status with the Council on their activities during the period from 1994 to 1997, from 1995 to 1998 and from 1996 to 1999, which have been deferred from previous sessions of the Committee (E/C.2/2003/CRP.2).

25. The Committee decided to defer its consideration of the quadrennial reports of the following organizations pending responses from the organizations to questions posed by the Committee:

Centrist Democrat International, formerly known as Christian Democratic International

International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims

Society for Threatened Peoples

World Safety Organization

26. The Committee decided to defer its consideration of the quadrennial reports of the following NGOs pending its review of the additional special reports requested from those organizations:

France Libertés: Fondation Danielle Mitterrand

Transnational Radical Party

B. New quadrennial reports

27. The Committee considered new quadrennial reports under item 4 of its agenda at its 3rd, 4th, 9th, 20th, 23rd, and 25th meetings, on 6, 7, 12, 20, 21, and 22 May 2003. It had before it memoranda of the Secretary-General containing new quadrennial reports (E/C.2/2003/2 and Add.1-10). The Committee took note of the quadrennial reports of 67 organizations (see part one, chap. I, draft decision I, subpara. (e)).

28. The Committee decided to defer its consideration of the quadrennial reports of the following organizations pending responses to the questions posed by the Committee on their reports:

International Press Institute

Islamic Relief

Robert F. Kennedy Memorial

Human Rights Watch

Human Rights Watch

29. The Committee considered the report of the Human Rights Watch at its 4th and 20th meetings, on 7 and 20 May 2002. In general, the Committee believed that the organization did good work as far as the scope of its activities was concerned. However, a number of delegations believed that the organization sometimes moved away from the scope of its activities and, in that regard, had some comments on its work. Delegations such as Cuba and Zimbabwe questioned the criteria selected by the organization in its country studies. One delegation believed that the organization should be more balanced in its views and judgements and not lead the campaign against African countries as the organization has done recently in the Sudan and Zimbabwe.

30. The delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran was of the view that the following features were defining characteristics of the changing and evolving environment in the context of globalization:

> "Alongside the primary responsibility of Member States to pursue strategies and policies geared to protect and promote human rights within their territories, collective responsibility must be assumed at the international level and a form of accountability accepted by those world institutions and countries whose decisions have decisive impacts on the lives and liberties of millions of individuals. In addition, groups and peoples worldwide must be acknowledged and taken into account in the overall assessment of the situation of human rights in all parts of the world.
>
> "Human rights no longer apply solely to political and civil rights, but also include social, cultural and economic rights and the right to development as defined in the International Bill of Rights and a number of other international instruments. Given the comprehensiveness and generality of human rights grounds on the basis with which the NGO has, thus far, identified itself with, Human Rights Watch needs to forge a balanced approach towards these sets of human rights and to make every effort to mainstream them into a varied range of activities in the field of human rights."

31. The representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran concluded that, in light of the above, Human Rights Watch was expected to continue its activities in such a way as to address all human rights issues and dynamics at the national and international level.

32. Other delegations, including France and Germany, pointed out that since members of the European Union had also come under severe criticism by the NGO, the organization seemed to be balanced and objective in the views expressed in its

reports. They were quite satisfied with the way the organization conducted its business. They were ready to take note of the report of the organization immediately without further questions.

33. The Committee deferred consideration of the quadrennial report of Human Rights Watch to its 2003 resumed session.

IV. Strengthening of the Non-Governmental Organizations Section of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs

34. At its 16th and 23rd meetings, on 16 and 21 May 2003, the Committee considered the following issue under item 5 of its agenda.

Paperless Committee

35. On 16 May 2003, the Chief of the Non-Governmental Organizations Section presented the pilot project for an electronic meeting system, or "Paperless Committee".

36. The Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations during its 2003 regular session was the first United Nations Committee to fully employ office automation and information technology in the conduct of its official work in an effort to eliminate the large volume of paper documentation that is normally required. This was achieved through a pilot project, the "Paperless Committee", an electronic meeting system. This undertaking represents a response to the proposals for rationalizing the management of conferences and meetings contained in recent reports on United Nations reform as they relate to electronic data processing and the flow of documentation as well as an attempt to facilitate the engagement of civil society and to support the global commitment to sustainability.

37. This initiative, spearheaded by the Non-Governmental Organizations Section of the Division for the Economic and Social Council Support and Coordination of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, is part of an ongoing effort to improve the effectiveness of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations and the efficiency of its working methods. Prompted by the Organization-wide interest in exploring ways to exploit information and communications technology (ICT) and wireless fidelity applications, the realization of the "Paperless Committee" has been made possible by innovative partnerships with the business community and academia. The Hewlett Packard Corporation loaned the necessary hardware to the Committee, supplying 25 laptop computers and wireless connectivity for each member of the Committee and for meeting support staff. Staff to set up the programme and work with Committee members as "guides and trainers" were provided by the Mumbai Educational Trust of Mumbai, India, which provided a two-month sponsorship for nine of its top technical students to work with the Non-Governmental Organizations Section and the Committee.

38. When fully implemented, the "Paperless Committee" will provide users with: continuous document updates from the Chair and Secretariat; data transfers; easier archiving; electronic messages; simultaneous submission of questions electronically, note-taking and report writing and electronic vote counting. The development of a web site giving delegates access to documentation of all NGOs in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council is envisaged. The use of laptops during the

sessions of the Committee will, in the long run, offset the cost of approximately 40,000 pages of documentation usually handed out to members of the Committee at each session. Inputs will include all the documentation required for the Committee, including conference room papers. The output will include: the electronic circulation of responses from NGOs to questions asked by the Committee; electronic requests from delegates; electronic viewable attendance lists of NGO representatives present in the room; and information retrieval with all relevant data about applicant NGOs.

39. The Secretary-General has stressed that the conferences and meetings convened by the United Nations and the array of documentation they produce "reflect a central and fundamental aspect of how the world's most inclusive multilateral institution conducts its business". Leadership and support of this innovative way of conducting the business of the Committee will be crucial in making this initiative a success that can be emulated in other parts of the organization.

40. In that regard, the Committee was of the opinion that the "Paperless Committee" should be fully implemented and become a normal mode of operation for the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, facilitating its deliberations, and reducing and eliminating the volume of paper documentation the Committee has been required to handle. As a result, at its 27th meeting on 23 May 2003, the Committee recommended to the Economic and Social Council that it takes note of the Committee's resolution on the "Paperless Committee", approves its decision to implement the "Paperless Committee" at its future sessions and request the Secretary-General to ensure the provision of adequate staff and facilities in order to implement that decision (see part one, sect. I, draft decision I and resolution 2003/1). The Secretary of the Committee read out a statement regarding the draft resolution on the implementation of the electronic meeting system ("Paperless Committee") (see annex I to the present report).

V. Review of the methods of work of the Committee: implementation of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31, including the process of accreditation of representatives of non-governmental organizations, and decision 1995/304

A. Working group established to review some aspects of the work of the Committee

41. At its 17th and 27th meetings, on 16 and 23 May 2003, Mr. Hakim Taken (Turkey), coordinator of the informal working group of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, reported to the Committee on the work of the working group. The working group was able to review most of the items of its agenda as follows.

Accreditation of non-governmental organizations to the Commission on Human Rights and strengthening of the relationship between the secretariats of the Commission on Human Rights and the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations

42. Mr. Taken informed the Committee that the working group had held several meetings during the year, during which it had prepared an informative letter focusing on the responsibilities of NGOs in accrediting representatives to intergovernmental meetings. The Committee decided to adopt the letter, which would be included in the information package distributed each year by the Secretariat to all NGOs enjoying consultative status.

Quadrennial reports

43. Mr. Taken stated that the working group had recognized that the quadrennial reports were a useful tool to monitor the large number of NGOs in special and general status. The group had acknowledged that the full potential of the quadrennial reports as a management tool had not been realized in past reviews. As a result, the working group, with a view to improving the contents of the submissions for monitoring purposes, had prepared new guidelines and a standardized format for the quadrennial report. Members of the Committee had reached consensus on the text of the quadrennial report as well as on the guidelines accompanying the report. At its 27th meeting on 27 May 2003, the Committee had adopted the new format of the report with the accompanying guidelines.

Monitoring of non-governmental organizations with roster status

44. It was agreed that a short letter/questionnaire should be sent to the 906 NGOs presently on the roster to encourage them to send a brief report on their activities. A draft of this letter/questionnaire will be prepared by the Secretariat for circulation among the members of the working group.

Non-governmental organizations under umbrella organizations

45. It was agreed that the Committee should take a case-by-case approach regarding the NGOs falling under umbrella organizations, keeping in mind the guidelines stipulated in paragraph 9 of Council resolution 1996/31.

Special reports

46. The working group agreed that the Committee could only approach these issues on a case-by-case basis and could not impose a detailed format on these reports due to their nature.

47. Mr. Taken informed the Committee that, owing to lack of time, the working group was not able to review the remaining issues on its agenda: reclassifications; backlog of applications; and mechanisms to improve the work of the Committee. These items will be examined at a later stage. The Committee agreed that progress has been made on the format of the report of the Committee. The report of the 2002 resumed session of the Committee, shorter in length and more concise, reflected this positive change.

B. Consideration of organizations whose defining characteristics are not in strict conformity with the provisions of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31

48. No organization placed in that category remained in the programme of work of the Committee.

C. Other related matters

1. Non-governmental organizations speaking before the 2003 session of the Economic and Social Council

49. At its 25th meeting, on 22 May, the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations approved the request of 29 organizations to be heard by the Council at the high-level, coordination and general segment of its forthcoming 2003 session (E/C.2/2003/CRP.4; see also E/2003/88). These organizations are listed below.

High-level segment

Agenda item 2: Promoting an integrated approach to rural development in developing countries for poverty eradication and sustainable development

Asian Legal Resource Centre (General, 1998)

Association tunisienne des meres (General, 2001)

Associazone Volontari per il Servizio Internazionale (General, 1966)

Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations (CONGO) (General, 2002)

Franciscans International (General, 1995)

International Chamber of Commerce (General, 1972)

International Confederation of Associations of Free Trade Unions (General, 1950)

International Federation of Associations of the Elderly (General, 1991)

International Federation of settlements and Neighbourhood Centres (General, 1998)

International Movement ATD Fourth World (General, 1991)

Organization for Industrial, Spiritual and Cultural Advancement International (OISCA) (General, 1995)

Soroptimist International (General, 1984)

World Family Organization (General, 1989)

World Assembly of Youth (General, 1950)

World Federation Of United Nations Association (General, 1947)

Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action (General, 1996)

All India Women's Education Fund Association (Special, 1999)

Foundation for the Social Promotion of Culture (Special, 2001)

International Cooperation for Development and Solidarity (Special, 1972)

Navjyoti (Delhi Police Foundation for Correction, De-addiction and Rehabilitation (Special, 1997)

Coordination segment

Agenda item 4: The role of Economic ans Social Council in the integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcomes of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits

Al-Koei Foundation (General, 1998)

Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations (CONGO)

International Federation of Settlements and Neighbourhoods Centres (General, 1998)

World Federation of United Nations Associations (General, 1947)

World Vision International (Special, 1985)

Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action (General, 1996)

Friends World Committee for Consultation (General, 2002)

General segment

Agenda item 14 (h) — Social and human rights questions: Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

The Netherlands Centre for Indigenous People (Special, 2002)

Indigenous Peoples' Center for Documentation, Research and Information (Roster, 2002)

2. Briefing on the Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations-Civil Society Relations

50. At its 11th meeting, on 13 May 2003, the Committee was briefed on the programme and objectives of the Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations-Civil Society Relations by Mr. John Clark, Project Director of the Panel.

51. Committee members were informed that the original panel, chaired by the former President of Brazil, Fernando Enrique Cardozo, and made up of 13 members from backgrounds in government, NGOs, academia and the private sector, had recently been joined by the Spanish philosopher Manuel Castells.

52. Mr. Clark, noting that the establishment of the group had been proposed by the Secretary-General in his most recent report on reform of the United Nations, pointed out that the rising number of civil society organizations, their diversity and widening role as partners in a number of United Nations initiatives, made strategic planning for their engagement a necessity. Relations between the United Nations and civil

society have expanded dramatically in recent years, while, at the same time, concerns have arisen with different constituencies. The panel will study these. Civil society is often concerned about the imbalance in representation between groups from the North and the South; whether their concerns are being seriously listened to; limitations on full access to the United Nations deliberative bodies and the multiplicity of civil society representatives in comparison to NGOs whose participation was originally envisaged. On the part of the Secretariat, there were questions of resource and time constraints attendant upon engagement with the growing numbers of non-State actors. Finally, Member States were sensitive to the possibility of encroachment on the deliberative space between Governments and questions regarding the legitimacy and representativity of the NGO voices that were being heard. The panel's mandate was to ensure that proven best practice became the norm for future engagement of civil society and to suggest further ways to smooth apparent conflicts of interest in order to improve the United Nations-civil society relationship.

53. The panel, working within a one-year time frame, would devote the first six months to gathering information on the world context including the impact of globalization, the development of the organized civil society movement and the evolution of the relationship between the United Nations and civil society organizations up to the present. This would be followed by an extensive process of interactive report writing, consisting of empirical research and consultations and exploring the practice and experience of other intergovernmental bodies with civil society organizations.

54. In response to questions and concerns raised by members of the Committee, Mr. Clark explained that the Panel would report directly to the Secretary-General, who would, in turn, make his recommendations to Member States in 2004. Moreover, the sequencing of their consultations with different major stakeholders would be very important as it might be better to gather civil society input before Government consultations, since Governments themselves, at the intergovernmental level, would be the primary beneficiaries of the recommendations. With regard to setting norms or encouraging NGO participation in the United Nations, this would not be a preoccupation of the panel. However, it would look at the convening role of intergovernmental organizations as the third party in "trialogue" between civil society, national Governments with the intergovernmental body as the third party. A variety of information gathering approaches were envisaged, including large-scale public hearings, balanced by smaller meetings to facilitate participation of entities to whom public hearings can be daunting. Similarly, stakeholder surveys might be undertaken as well as some "key player interviews" to questions regarding the contribution of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations in its capacity as the portal between these organizations and the United Nations and its oversight functions of the United Nations-NGO relationship. Mr. Clark acknowledged that it might be good to use the Committee as a brainstorming resource, although no real role had been assigned or developed as yet. Similarly, in response to concerns expressed by Committee members regarding regulations already in place for the United Nations-NGO relationship, notably Council resolution 1996/31, Mr. Clark emphasized that the purpose of the panel was to build on successful practice, not to ignore the evolution of United Nations-civil society relations up to this day, likening its mission to that of a map maker concerned with finding out where one stood in

relation to the surrounding topography, identifying possible destinations and indicating the best route to take to arrive at them.

55. The Committee expressed its appreciation for Mr. Clark's briefing, and requested to be informed on a regular basis as Mr. Clark's presentation was found to be useful, opportune and informative.

3. Non-governmental organizations requesting withdrawal of status

56. At its 17th meeting, on 16 May 2003, the Committee took note of the request for withdrawal of status submitted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and agreed to remove it from the list. The organization was granted observer status with the General Assembly on 19 November 2002 (General Assembly resolution 57/32).

4. Matters pertaining to reinstatement of consultative status of non-governmental organizations in cases where consultative status was suspended by the Economic and Social Council

57. At its 17th meeting, on 16 May 2003, the Committee considered the criteria of reinsertion of consultative status in cases where consultative status was suspended by the Economic and Social Council. The representatives of Cuba, China, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Sudan and Pakistan strongly opposed the automatic reinstatement of status of a non-governmental organization, suggesting that the Committee should be prudent in making any decision as it would create a precedence in the Committee. As a lengthy debate followed the examination of this issue, the Committee decided, on the advice of France, Germany and Chile, to seek the assistance of the Office of Legal Affairs on the interpretation of Council resolution 1996/31 regarding the difference between withdrawal and suspension of status when it comes to reinstatement of consultative status of NGOs whose consultative status was suspended. The response received from the Office of Legal Affairs was circulated to members of the Committee. The Committee will resume consideration of this issue at its 2003 resumed session.

VI. Implementation of Economic and Social Council decision 2001/295

58. At its 8th meeting, on 9 May 2003, the Committee considered, under agenda item 7, the requests for consultative status of organizations placed on the roster for the purpose of the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development (see E/2003/CRP.5). The Committee, in its deliberations, proceeded in accordance with Council decision 2001/295, in which the Council had decided that NGOs referred to in its decision 1993/220 that wished to expand their participation in other fields of the Council would be considered by the Committee, and that the Committee would do so as expeditiously as possible under an item of its agenda, following the rules and provisions stipulated in Council resolution 1996/31.

59. The Committee decided to grant roster consultative status to the WorldWatch Institute (see part one, draft decision I, subpara. (a)). It deferred consideration of the application of the Environmental Protection Society, pending its response to questions posed by the Committee at its 2002 resumed session.

VII. Consideration of special reports and complaints by Member States

60. The Committee considered agenda item 8 at its 7th, 21st, 24th, 26th and 27th meetings, on 9, 20, 22 and 23 May 2003. It had before it documents E/C.2/2002/3, and Add.1 and 2.

A. Consideration of special reports

Movement against Racism and for Friendship among Peoples

61. At its 2001 resumed session, the Committee had before it a special report submitted by the organization in response to a complaint lodged by the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran, charging it with having accredited the terrorist organization Modjahedin Khalgh Organization/National Council of Resistance (MKO/NCR) to the fifty-seventh session of the Commission on Human Rights. The report was not found satisfactory by the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which requested the organization to prepare an additional report, to contain a statement that the organization would not accredit terrorist organizations in the future. At its 2002 regular session, the Committee, having noted that the organization had failed to address the issue at hand, requested that the organization submit at the next session of the Committee a written statement apologizing for the error of judgement in using its privilege to accredit MKO/NCR, and giving a firm assurance that it would not give such assistance in the future to that organization or any other with known terrorist activities. A written acknowledgment to the satisfaction of the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran was submitted by the organization at the 2003 regular session of the Committee. The Committee decided to close consideration on the complaint against the organization.

France Libertés-Fondation Danielle Mitterrand

62. At its 2001 resumed session, the Committee had before it a response from the NGO France Libertés-Fondation Danielle Mitterand to questions posed by the Committee on the quadrennial report submitted by the organization at the previous session of the Committee. The delegation of China requested that the organization present a special report on its view of China's sovereignty over Tibet.

63. At its 2002 session, the Committee had before it a special report submitted by the organization. The delegation of China claimed that the organization completely disregarded the fact that Tibet was Chinese territory, questioning the territorial integrity of China, and requested that the organization provide an additional special report on its position regarding China's sovereignty over Tibet to be submitted at the 2003 regular session of the Committee.

64. At its 2003 regular session, a representative of the organization addressed the Committee. She reported to the Committee that the President of the organization, Mme. Danielle Mitterrand, had met with the Ambassador of China in Paris and had a fruitful exchange of views. She stated that she was sorry for the misunderstanding the statement provided in the special report may have caused, that she was glad to be given the opportunity to dissipate the misunderstanding and that the organization had never intended to question the territorial integrity of China. She assured the

Committee of the organization's deep commitment to and full respect for the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations.

65. The representative of China noted that the organization had expressed its respect for the sovereignty of China and its territorial integrity and also its intention to abide by the principles and purposes of the Charter. He stated that an organization, while promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms, should truly act according to the principles of the Charter and Council resolution 1996/31.

66. The delegate of France thanked the delegation of China for having engaged in a constructive dialogue with the organization. The representatives of the Sudan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan, Cuba, Côte d'Ivoire and Turkey also expressed the view that it was important for organizations in consultative status with the Council to abide by the principles governing the relationship between NGOs and the United Nations as stipulated in Council resolution 1996/31.

Transnational Radical Party

67. At its 2002 regular session, the Committee was informed that Viet Nam had lodged a complaint through its Permanent Mission to the United Nations, against the Transnational Radical Party for providing accreditation to the Montagnard Foundation, Inc. (MFI), which allowed a representative to speak at the fifty-eighth session of the Commission on Human Rights. The representative of Viet Nam stated that the MFI was a terrorist group and an arm of a larger terrorist organization known as the Front Unifié pour la Liberation de Races Opprimées (FULRO), an armed organization created during the war in Viet Nam against the people of Viet Nam. MFI had openly acknowledged that it was an arm of FULRO in an announcement distributed in Geneva.

68. The representative of Viet Nam declared that the Transnational Radical Party should put an end to this abuse of its consultative status and requested that the organization be made to explain its improper actions in a special report to be prepared about the incident. In light of the general support of the request of the delegation from Viet Nam, the Committee decided to request that the Transnational Radical Party prepare a special report on its activities and the incident that gave rise to the complaint by the delegation of Viet Nam for submission to the Committee's resumed 2002 session.

69. At the resumed 2002 session, the representative of Viet Nam stated that he was not satisfied with the report submitted by the Transnational Radical Party and would request it to extend an official apology and a commitment in writing not to accredit MFI at any Council meeting in the future. Therefore, the organization was requested by the Committee to submit a new supplementary report for consideration by the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations at its 2003 regular session, including information on the activities carried out by the organization.

70. At its 2003 regular session, the Committee had before it the new supplementary report submitted by the organization.

71. At its 24th meeting, on 22 May 2003, the representative of Viet Nam stated that the organization had deliberately failed to acknowledge the fact that the accreditation by the Transnational Radical Party to Mr. Kok Ksor, Chairman of MFI, to speak before the fifty-eighth session of the Commission of Human Rights against his country, was an act of abuse and violation of Council resolution 1996/31. In its

report, the organization denied that there was a link between Mr. Kok Ksor and MFI with FULRO, a terrorist group. He stressed that the organization also denied that Mr. Ksor and MFI had incited to violent riots in Viet Nam and had advocated for an independent state of Degar, an act that was not only politically motivated but blatantly threatened the sovereignty and territorial integrity of his country.

72. Furthermore, the representative pointed out that, while the question was still under consideration in the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, the Transnational Radical Party had renewed the accreditation of Mr. Kok Ksor at the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on Human Rights.

73. Consequently, his Government requested that the organization cease to give its platform to Mr. Ksor and that it present an official apology to the Government of Viet Nam in written form in which it should also explain the reasons for its behaviour.

74. The representatives of China, Cuba, India, the Sudan, and the Russian Federation took the floor to support the views of the representative of Viet Nam.

75. The representative of Germany, supported by the representatives of France and the United States of America, stressed that neither the name of the individual nor the name of the organization referred to by the representative of Viet Nam were listed on the lists of terrorists issued by competent bodies nor on the list of terrorists compiled by the European Union. Consequently, requesting the organization to present an apology would automatically label Mr. Ksor as a terrorist, which would be unacceptable to his delegation.

76. The representative of Italy, speaking as an Observer State, was of the view that the organization had not violated the principles of resolution 1996/31 since it had followed the required accreditation procedure as explained in the letter addressed by the Chairman of the fifty-eighth session of the Commission on Human Rights to the Ambassador of Viet Nam in Geneva. In addition, she was of the view that any allegations of terrorism against Mr. Ksor should not be retained since he had been invited to participate in a series of United Nations meetings as well as at two parliamentary hearings on freedom of religion held in the Italian Chamber of Deputies and Senate.

77. As a result of the debate, the Committee decided to ask the Transnational Radical Party to further clarify its position on the accusations made by the representative of Viet Nam. The organization's reply will be considered at the 2003 resumed session of the Committee.

B. Complaints submitted by Member States

78. At its 2003 session, the Committee had before it the complaints made by the Member States against three NGOs, as described below.

Simon Wiesenthal Center

79. At its 7th meeting, on 9 May 2003, the Committee was informed by the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, speaking as an Observer State, that he had lodged a complaint, through his Permanent Mission to the United Nations, against Simon Wiesenthal Center, an organization with special consultative status

with the Council. He complained that the organization distributed a letter urging Member States to oppose the candidacy of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya for the chairmanship of the fifty-eighth session of the Commission on Human Rights to represent the Group of African States. The representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya declared that the organization had interfered in the affairs of a Member State, thus violating the rules of conduct as stipulated in Council resolution 1996/31. He requested that the Center send a letter of apology, giving assurances that it would refrain from such action in the future.

80. The Committee, not having found itself in a position to address the issue at its 2003 regular session, decided to defer consideration of the complaint to its 2003 resumed session.

81. The representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya regretted that the complaint of his Government could not be examined at the session of 2003. He deplored the fact that, in spite of the flexibility that his delegation had shown vis-à-vis other members of the Committee, his request had been met with rigidity by a number of members of the Committee. He indicated that his delegation would not be as flexible in the future.

Reporters without Borders

82. At its 7th meeting, on 9 May 2003, the representative of Cuba introduced a complaint in the Committee against Reporters without Borders, an organization with special consultative status with the Council. Cuba stated that the organization had organized a provocation against its embassy in France and had occupied the Cuban Tourist Office in Paris for several hours. It also reported that the organization was also responsible for another regrettable incident at the opening of the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on Human Rights in Geneva.

83. In that regard, the Committee had also before it a letter from the Chairperson of the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on Human Rights, Ms. Najat Al-Hajjaji (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), stating that the organization had disrupted the opening of the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on Human Rights by throwing flyers, which contained abusive language against the chairmanship of her country. This act was further corroborated by a press release issued on the organization's web site. Ms. Hajjaji explained that she brought this incident to the attention of the Chair of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations at the request of the expanded bureau of the Commission on Human Rights.

84. In addition, the delegation of Cuba pointed out that the organization had not submitted a quadrennial report since it has been granted consultative status with the Council in 1993. The delegation of Cuba requested that the Committee suspend the consultative status of the organization for three years.

85. The representative of France said that it was not for the Committee to discuss an incident that took place in Paris and was being reviewed by the French courts. The rally was peaceful until it was broken up violently by the staff of the Cuban embassy, as a result of which several French citizens got hurt. Maintenance of public order in the streets of Paris was the sole responsibility of French authorities. He recalled that in France, the right to demonstrate was a protected public freedom. As regards the distribution of pamphlets at the opening of the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on Human Rights, the Committee was to examine the letter from

the bureau of the Commission. Cuba's demand for suspension, he said, was out of proportion to the incident. Cuba believed that the complaint of its Government concerned the conduct of an NGO, not bilateral relations between the two countries.

86. At the 21st meeting of the Committee, on 20 May 2003, the delegation of Cuba focused on the incident that took place in the fifty-ninth session of Commission on Human Rights and the fact that the NGO had never submitted a quadrennial report. Regarding the incident at the Commission on Human Rights, the representative of Cuba considered that, pursuant to paragraph 57 (a) of resolution 1996/31, the organization has been involved in acts violating the aims and principles of the Charter, and "in those cases had had a political motivation against Member States". According to his delegation, the organization had abused its privileges granted by its consultative status with the Council. For this reason and as a show of flexibility on his part, he made a proposal that the organization's status be suspended for one year instead of three as requested a week earlier.

87. The representative of France stated that, since 1996, the Committee had never ruled against an organization without giving an opportunity to provide an explanation. He stated that the delegation of Cuba had asked the Committee to judge and condemn the organization without having heard the organization, without giving it the opportunity to defend itself. He questioned the Committee as to whether the justice it wished to render was a blind justice and as to whether its recommendation should be an arbitrary one. Consequently, under rule 50 of the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council, the representative of France made a proposal of no-action motion against the organization.

88. China and the Sudan made statements against the motion and the United States of America and Chile made statements in favour of the motion.

89. The Committee by a roll-call vote of 9 to 6, with 4 abstentions, rejected the no-action motion. The voting was as follows:

In favour:

Chile, France, Germany, Peru, Romania, United States of America

Against:

China, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Sudan, Turkey, Zimbabwe

Abstentions:

Cameroon, Colombia, India, Senegal

90. The procedural motion, under rule 50, was withdrawn, and the Committee then proceeded to vote on the proposal made by the representative of Cuba to recommend that the status of the organization be suspended for one year.

General statements before the vote

91. The representative of France and the observer for the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya made general statements before the vote. The delegate of France explained that since most of the members of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations were not present at the session of the Commission on Human Rights at which the incident took place, the Committee could not legally take a decision without having had the opportunity to hear the organization. The expanded bureau of the Commission on Human Rights had brought the matter to the attention of the Committee on Non-

Governmental Organizations so that it could evaluate the situation before taking action.

92. The representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, speaking as an Observer State, stated that the behaviour of the NGO jeopardized the security and order of the meeting. In addition, the organization seemed to have little interest in the work of the United Nations, noting that it had not submitted a quadrennial report since it was granted status in 1993.

Statements in explanation of vote before the vote

93. Statements in explanation of vote before the vote were made by the representatives of Germany, Zimbabwe, China and Peru. The delegations of Germany, Chile and Peru explained that, should the Committee take a decision without having first heard from the organization, it would deny it the fundamental right of due process, a right which was also a human right. Such an action would not set a good precedent for the Committee.

94. The proposal made by Cuba was carried by a roll-call vote of 9 to 6, with 4 abstentions. The voting was as follows:

In favour:

China, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Sudan, Turkey, Zimbabwe

Against:

Chile, France, Germany, Peru, Romania, United States of America

Abstentions:

Cameroon, Colombia, India, Senegal

Statements in explanation of vote after the vote

95. Statements in explanation of vote after the vote were made by the representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan, Chile, France and Romania. The representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran said that the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations should base its decisions on the principles governing Council resolution 1996/31. There was no provision in resolution 1996/31 that obliged the Committee to give an opportunity to the organization to provide an explanation of the incident before the Committee takes action. He was supported by the delegations of Sudan and Pakistan, as well as by Cuba, which said that the organization had already recognized officially what it did. He added that none of the Committee members supporting the NGO referred to the substantive part of Cuba's complaint.

96. The delegations of Chile and Romania stated that they voted against the proposal because the Committee did not give an opportunity to the organization to provide an explanation of the complaint lodged against it. The delegation of France said that, by taking a hasty decision for which there was no precedent, the Committee risked undermining its own credibility and that the expedited procedures were contrary to the spirit of resolution 1996/31.

Indian Movement "Tupaj Amaru"

97. At its 24th meeting, on 22 May 2003, the representative of the United States of America lodged a complaint before the Committee against the organization, Indian Movement "Tupaj Amaru", an international organization with special consultative status with the Council. The representative of the United States of America stated that, during the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on Human Rights, two representatives of the organization had rushed towards the United States delegation carrying a large cylindrical object. While facing the camera of a Cuban television crew, these two individuals had unfurled a banner on which were written four letters, "PACE", and had chanted anti-American slogans. The representative said that this behaviour constituted an abuse of the organization's status with the Economic and Social Council and that its conduct consisted of politically motivated acts taken against a Member State of the United Nations. In addition, the actions of these two individuals alarmed the United States delegates, especially during these times of heightened concern about terrorism.

98. The United States delegation requested a report on the incident from the organization in order to evaluate what future steps the Committee needed to take in its evaluation of the situation. The representative of the United States asked the organization to specify in its report what procedures it followed in deciding to accredit the two individuals concerned in the above-mentioned event, how long each of them had been a member of the organization, what actions the organization took to sanction such actions, when the organization learned that the two individuals were planning to run onto the floor of the Commission on Human Rights with the banner and what steps had been taken by the organization to ensure that no person accredited by the NGO would engage in conduct like this in the future.

99. It was decided that the report, with the explanations requested by the delegate of the United States would be submitted for consideration by the Committee at its 2003 resumed session. A member of the Committee also highlighted the fact that the organization had already sent two letters, one to the United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights and one to the Head of Security and Safety Services of the United Nations, expressing its regret regarding the situation and explaining that the action taken at the Commission on Human Rights was a personal decision taken by the person engaged in the incident. The letter also stated that the organization was not aware of the decision nor did its representative give his consent for the action. It was explained that the representative immediately withdrew the accreditation to the individual concerned. The circulation of these two letters was requested by the Secretariat".

VIII. General voluntary trust fund in support of the United Nations Non-Governmental Organizations Informal Regional Network

Non-Governmental Organizations Section Outreach Programme

100. At its 18th meeting, on 19 May 2003, the Committee heard a presentation from the Chief of the Non-Governmental Organizations Section of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs on the work accomplished over the year by the United

Nations Non-Governmental Organizations Informal Regional Network (UN-NGO-IRENE).

101. The goal of the Informal Regional Network is to enhance the NGO contribution to the United Nations-Economic and Social Council agenda and to strengthen the Non-Governmental Organizations Sector from within by building parity among its organizations. Achievement of this overarching goal was based on providing access to up-to-date information and the benefits of ongoing communications through a technology-based system designed to promote interactive exchange and partnership initiatives among NGOs and between NGOs and the United Nations.

102. As a follow-up to the launching of the Informal Regional Network/Africa in Tunisia in January 2002, two projects designed by the Non-Governmental Organizations Section, in cooperation with leading African NGOs, will be implemented in the region. The first project is focused on the capacity-building of the African Informal Regional Network, with a view to strengthening the United Nations partnership with civil society and Governments towards the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals in Africa. The second project is related to United Nations partnership initiatives with African NGOs to strengthen their capacity and enhance their contribution to the Millennium Development Goals in the fields of human security and local sustainable development.

103. The Informal Regional Network in Eastern Europe was scheduled to be launched at the end of May 2003 in Romania. In 2004, the Secretariat intended to launch the Network in Asia, and subsequently in Latin America.

104. The Secretariat was engaged in the promotion of partnership initiatives and grass-roots projects at national, regional and subregional levels. Training workshops had been, and will continue to be, organized in the areas of: information and communications technology (ICT); leadership and governance; formulation of technical cooperation projects and partnership initiatives by NGOs; negotiation and communication skills; and professionalism and ethics. A comprehensive strategy was adopted to raise funds for the Informal Regional Network activities in the framework of the voluntary trust fund established by Economic and Social Council decision 2002/225. Strong support is needed in this field to continue to move the NGO agenda forward.

105. The success of the various projects in the future activities envisaged through the use of the Informal Regional Networks depends upon appropriate and secure advisory services, human resources and funding capacity to ensure their full and timely implementation. The active participation of the main stakeholders, in particular in needs assessment studies, the design, the funding and implementation of programmes, monitoring and analysis of monitoring results, also represents a main factor for success The list of activities executed by the Secretariat was compiled in a document circulated to members of the Committee, who very much appreciated the work done, strongly supported the ongoing and projected activities of the Informal Regional Networks and proposed to seek means and ways for their funding without delay.

106. Some delegations expressed the view that the activities of the Informal Regional Networks could help bridge the gap in the number of NGOs from the developed and developing world. It was suggested that NGOs from the South

identified through the outreach programme could be reviewed as expeditiously as possible.

IX. Organization of the session

A. Opening and duration of the session

107. The Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations held its 2003 session from 5 to 23 May 2003. The Committee held 27 meetings (1st to 27th).

B. Attendance

108. The session was attended by the 19 members of the Committee. Observers for other States Members of the United Nations, an observer for a non-member State, representatives of organizations of the United Nations system and observers for NGOs also attended. The list of participants is contained in annex III to the present report.

109. The 2003 session of the Committee heard 14 representatives of NGOs who were given the opportunity to respond to questions raised by the Committee. The additional information provided by the representatives facilitated the debate and the work of the Committee in taking its decisions.

C. Election of officers

110. At its 1st meeting, on 5 May, the Committee re-elected the following officers by acclamation:

Chairperson:
Mihaela Blajan (Romania)

Vice-Chairpersons:
Pedro Augustin Roa (Colombia)
Ishtiaq H. Andrabi (Pakistan)
Meshack Kitchen (Zimbabwe)

111. At the same meeting, the Committee also elected, by acclamation, Hakan Riza Tekin (Turkey) to replace Martin Thuemmel (Germany), and re-elected Isl .q H. Andrabi (Pakistan) to serve as Rapporteur as well as Vice-Chairperson of the Committee.

D. Agenda

112. At its 1st meeting, on 5 May, the Committee adopted the provisional agenda for its 2003 session as contained in document E/C.2/2003/1. The agenda was as follows:

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.

3. Applications for consultative status and requests for reclassification received from non-governmental organizations:

   (a) Applications for consultative status and requests for reclassification deferred from the previous session of the Committee;

   (b) New applications for consultative status and requests for reclassification.

4. Review of quadrennial reports submitted by non-governmental organizations in general and special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council.

5. Strengthening of the Non-Governmental Organizations Section of the Secretariat.

6. Review of the methods of work of the Committee: implementation of Council resolution 1996/31, including the process of accreditation of representatives of non-governmental organizations, and Council decision 1995/304:

   (a) Process of accreditation of representatives of non-governmental organizations;

   (b) Consideration of organizations whose defining characteristics are not in strict conformity with the provisions of Council resolution 1996/31;

   (c) Consideration of issues in the agenda of the informal working group;

   (d) Other related matters.

7. Implementation of Council decision 2001/295.

8. Consideration of special reports.

9. General voluntary trust fund in support of the United Nations Non-Governmental Organizations Informal Regional Network.

10. Provisional agenda and documentation for the 2004 session of the Committee.

11. Adoption of the report of the Committee.

113. At the same meeting, the Committee approved its organization of work as contained in working paper 1, as orally revised.

E. Resumed 2003 session

114. At its 27th meeting, on 23 May 2003, the Chairperson introduced a draft decision authorizing a resumed session of the Committee from 15 to 19 December 2003. The Secretary of the Committee read out a statement regarding the conference-servicing implications of the draft decision (see annex II to the present report). Following a statement by the representative of Colombia, the Committee adopted the draft decision (see part one, sect. I, draft decision IV).

F. Documentation

115. The list of documents that were before the Committee at its 2003 session is contained in annex IV.

X. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its 2003 session

116. At its 27th meeting on 23 May 2003, the Committee adopted the draft report as contained in document E/C.2/2003/L.1, as well as an informal paper, in English only (see part one, sect. I, draft decision V), and authorized the Rapporteur to finalize the report, in consultation with the members of the Committee as appropriate.

Annex I

Statement regarding the draft resolution on the electronic meeting system ("Paperless Committee")

1. Under the terms of the draft resolution, the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations would:

(a) Recommend that to the Economic and Social Council decide that the electronic meeting system become, on a trial basis for the period of one year, with a view to its implementation on a permanent basis upon successful completion of the trial phase, a normal mode of operation for the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations in order to facilitate its deliberations and reduce and eliminate the volume of paper documentation that the Committee is required to handle;

(b) Request the Secretariat to prepare a document for the Economic and Social Council containing detailed information on the resource requirements for this decision, including on the possibilities of offsetting these requirements against costs saved by the introduction of the electronic meeting system and other options to meet these requirements from within existing resources, in order to enable the Council to take a fully informed decision on these requirements.

2. The Secretariat wishes to inform the Committee that the report will include options for meeting the resource requirements for the operation of the electronic meeting system on a trial basis for one year, as recommended by the Committee. The Secretariat does not exclude the possibility of including an option for meeting the requirements through the provision of additional resources, if necessary.

3. As regards the inclusion of the phrase "within existing resources" the attention of the Committee is drawn to the provision of resolution 45/248 B, section VI, in which the General Assembly:

(a) Reaffirmed that the Fifth Committee was the appropriate Main Committee of the General Assembly entrusted with responsibilities for administration and budgetary matters;

(b) Reaffirmed also the role of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions;

(c) Expressed its concern at the tendency of its substantive Committees and other intergovernmental bodies to involve themselves in administrative and budgetary matters;

(d) Invited the Secretary-General to provide all intergovernmental bodies with the required information regarding procedures for administrative and budgetary matters.

Annex II

Statement of conference-servicing implications of a resumed session of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations in December 2003

1. The present statement has been prepared in accordance with rule 28 of the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council.

2. Under the terms of the draft decision IV (see part one, sect. I), the Economic and Social Council would decide to authorize the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations to hold a resumed session, from 15 to 19 December 2003, in order to complete the work of its 2003 session.

3. The proposal would entail the provision of a total of 10 meetings (two meetings per day), with full interpretation services. There would be 120 pages of pre-session, 10 pages of in-session and 50 pages of post-session documentation in six languages. On this basis, conference-servicing requirements are estimated at $316,308, at full cost.

4. A review of the calendar of meetings shows that conference facilities and services would be available during the period of 15 to 19 December 2003. Under these circumstances, the adoption of the draft decision would not entail additional requirements.

Annex III

List of participants

Members

Cameroon	Martin Belinga Eboutou, Cathérine Mahouve Same, Naomie Akono
Chile	Loreto Leyton, Osvaldo Alvarez
China	Bohua Xie, Meifang Zhang, Lei Zhang
Colombia	Luis Guillermo Giraldo, José Nicolás Rivas, Beatriz Patti Londoño, Pedro Augustin Roa
Côte d'Ivoire	Serges Gba
Cuba	Bruno Rodriguez Parilla, Orlando Requeijo Gual, Ana Teresita González, Ricardo Tur Novo, Jorge Luis Bernaza, Luis A. Amorós Núñez, Margarita Valle Camino, Mario Medina, Margarita Valle
France	Caroline Belot, Hugues Moret, Yvan Chatilla
Germany	Martin Thuemmel
India	V. K. Nambiar, A. Gopinathan, Mukta D. Tomar
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Mostafa Alaei
Pakistan	Ishtiaq H. Andrabi
Peru	Oswaldo de Rivero, Alfredo Chuguihuara, Carmen Rosa Arias
Romania	Mihaela Blajan, Gabriela Tanjala
Russian Federation	A. A. Nikiforov, D. V. Knyazhinskiy, V. A. Vertogradov
Senegal	Papa Louis Fall, Malick Thierno Sow, Leysa Faye
Sudan	Ilham Ibrahim Mohamed Ahmed, Hassan Hamid Hassan
Turkey	Hakan Tekin, Yavuz Cubukcu
United States	Sichan Siv, John Davison, Joseph M. Bracken, Hugh Dugan
Zimbabwe	Meshack Kitchen

States Members of the United Nations represented by observers

Algeria, Andorra, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belize, Canada, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Ethiopia, Finland, Ghana, Guatemala, Hungary, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Morocco, Nigeria, Poland, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Tunisia, Viet Nam

Non-Member States represented by observers

Holy See

Annex IV

List of documents

Document symbol	*Agenda item*	*Title or description*
E/C.2/2003/1	2	Annotated provisional agenda
E/C.2/2003/2 and Add.1-10	4	Quadrennial reports
E/C.2/2002/3		Special reports
E/C.2/2000/3	8	
E/C.2/2001/3 and Add.1 and 2		
E/C.2/2003/CRP.2 and Add.1-5	3 (b)	New applications for consultative status
E/C.2/2003/CRP.1	4 (a)	Compilation of applications for consultative status deferred from previous sessions of the Committee
	7	Compilation of deferred quadrennial reports
E/C.2/2003/CRP.3	4 (a)	Requests for reclassification deferred from previous sessions of the Committee
E/C.2/2003/CRP.4	2	Requests by non-governmental organizations to be heard by the Economic and Social Council
E/C.2/2003/CRP.5	7	Deferred applications